

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element having a bone contacting surface and having at least one elongate opening for receiving a fixation element, said opening having a recessed outwardly facing surface around the opening, said recessed outwardly facing surface tapering towards the bone contacting surface from a first to a second smaller cross-section and ~~an one-piece elongate insert for insertion that may be inserted in~~ the opening wherein the insert exhibits an continuous external portion~~form~~ that is generally complementary to the recessed outwardly facing surface and a multi-section internal portion complimentary to an internal surface of the opening extending from the second smaller cross-section toward the bone contacting surface ~~in a direction parallel to a central axis of the opening~~ and wherein the insert exhibits a central through-bore for mounting the body of the fixation element, and in which the ~~elongate opening implantable orthopedic device~~ exhibits a bottom surface extending generally parallel to or co-linear with the bone contacting surface ~~means~~ for holding the insert in the opening wherein an internal portion section of the insert exhibits at least one ~~locking mechanism~~ projection for extending along the bottom ~~which conformingly locks with the internal surface of the opening.~~

2. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert projection is mounted over the locking mechanism ~~has~~ at least one deflectable internal portion section~~extension~~ that extends~~goes~~ along an elongate~~one~~ side of the insert internal portion.

3. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 2 wherein the internal portion section extension ~~forms a planar side of the insert and the projection is configured in a flexible manner in the standard direction or inclined to~~ the principal plane of the load-bearing element along the axis and/or that the extension includes a groove running in a plane parallel to the principal plane of the load-bearing element.

4. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim ~~3~~ wherein the ~~locking mechanism include at least one projection extending away from the central through-bore and is intended for engagement with the load-bearing element~~ bottom surface.

5. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the ~~projectionlocking mechanisms can engagebe fixed against the bottom surface~~ load-bearing element by means of a fixation element in the opening and remain engaged with the bottom surface ~~load-bearing element and cannot be released until the aforementioned fixation element has been removed from the opening.~~

6. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim ~~4~~ wherein the ~~insert exhibits projectionat least one locking mechanism which can interact~~ s with a complementary area in the area of the bottom surfaceunderside of the load-bearing element.

7. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 6 wherein the load-bearing element exhibits at least one recess on the underside of the load-bearing element adjacent the internal surface to form the bottom surface, in which the ~~projectionlocking mechanisms~~ can be engaged, so that the insert,

does not extend beyond the bone contacting surface ~~aforementioned~~
underside.

8. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 6 wherein the projection ~~locking mechanism~~ can be engaged under a bottom surface ~~the underside~~ of the load-bearing element which is co-linear with the bone contacting surface so that the insert extends beyond the aforementioned bone contacting surface ~~underside~~ and acts as a spacer.

9. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the central through-bore of the insert exhibits an inclined axis that deviates from an axis normal to the principal plane of the load-bearing element, in which the aforementioned inclined axis is inclined towards a narrow side of the load-bearing element and/or in the direction of the longitudinal axis of the load-bearing element.

10. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1 wherein the insert and opening are elongated in a ~~the~~ longitudinal direction of the load bearing element.

11. (currently amended) A bone stabilization device comprising:

an elongated bone plate having a plurality of apertures extending through the bone plate, at least one of said apertures having a recessed surface which is arranged around the opening and which extends and tapers inwardly from a larger cross-section at an upper surface of said load-bearing element to a smaller cross-section, sidewalls including planar walls forming said ~~the~~ aperture extending perpendicularly to a bone contacting surface from the smaller cross-section of the recessed surface and at least one one-piece insert having a body

with a threaded bore and a first portion with a continuous~~an~~ outer surface complimentary to~~for engaging said sidewalls and~~ said the recessed surface of said aperture and a second portion having an outer surface complimentary to said sidewalls of said aperture, at least part of said aperture is surrounded by a bottom~~looking~~ surface and said insert second portion outer surface having a planar resilient extension extending parallel to the planar walls of the aperture and including a projection for engaging said bottom~~looking~~ surface.

12. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 11 wherein said aperture has a central axis extending from a top plate surface to a bottom plate surface and said bore in said insert has a central axis inclined with respect to said aperture central axis.

13. (original) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 11 wherein the aperture is in the form of an elongate slot.

14. (currently amended) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 13 wherein said insert second portion has an elongate outer surface for placement adjacent an elongate inner surface of said slot and said projection on the resilient planar extension extends between said adjacent surfaces.

15. (currently amended) The bone stabilization device as set forth in claim 14 wherein said bottom~~looking~~ surface is a ledge formed around at least the planar wall~~part~~ of said aperture inner surface of said aperture and said resilient extension projection~~has an outwardly extending lip for engaging~~ said ledge.

16. (currently amended) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element, having a bone contacting surface and an opposite upper surface and at least one elongated opening between said two surfaces, at least one fixation element, and at least one one-piece insert exhibiting a central through-bore for mounting the body of the fixation element, wherein said at least one elongated opening of the load-bearing element comprises internal surfaces including two planar side walls perpendicular to and intersecting the bone contacting surface and a recessed surface surrounding the elongated opening extending from the planar side walls tapering outwardly to the upper surface of the load-bearing element, wherein said insert is insertable in said opening and exhibits an external form including a continuous first portion complimentary to the outwardly tapered recessed surface surrounding the opening and a second portion including two planar sidewalls that areis generally complementary to the two planar sidewalls of the internal surfaces of the elongate opening for engagement therewith and at least one inwardly deflectable sidewall portion locking mechanism including a projection, which projection extends along a bottom surface adjacent and parallel to or co-linear with the bone contacting surface ofe conformingly locks the load-bearing element adjacentin the opening.

17. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the insert or the ~~locking mechanism~~ has at least one projection extension that extendsgoes along each a first sidewall of the insert.

18. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 17 wherein the planar sidewalls areextension-is configured in a flexible manner in the innerstandard direction of the opening or

~~inclined to the principal plane of the load-bearing element along the axis, and/or that the sidewall extension includes~~ a groove running in ~~at the~~ principal plane of the load-bearing element.

19. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 186 wherein ~~the locking mechanism includes at least one projection extending away from the central through-bore and intended for engagement with the load-bearing element, the projection extending outwardly of the opening sidewall when the insert sidewall conforms with the opening sidewall.~~

20. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 16, wherein the ~~insert locking mechanisms~~ can be fixed ~~in against~~ the load-bearing element by means of a fixation element in the opening and remain engaged with the load bearing element and cannot be released until the aforementioned fixation element has been removed from the opening.

Claim 21 (canceled)

22. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1621 wherein the load-bearing element exhibits at least one recess on the bottom surface~~underside~~ of the load-bearing element adjacent the elongate opening sidewalls, in which the ~~projection locking mechanisms~~ can be engaged, so that the insert, does not extend beyond the bone contacting surface~~aforementioned underside~~.

23. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 1621 wherein the ~~projection locking mechanism~~ can be engaged under the bottom surface~~underside~~ of the load-bearing element so

that the insert extends beyond the bottom surface~~afere~~mentioned
~~underside~~ and acts as a spacer.

24. (previously presented) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the central through-bore of the insert exhibits an inclined axis that deviates from an axis normal to the principal plane of the load-bearing element, in which the aforementioned inclined axis is inclined towards a narrow side of the load-bearing element and/or in the direction of the longitudinal axis of the load-bearing element.

25. (currently amended) The device as set forth in claim 16 wherein the insert and opening are elongated in the longitudinal direction of the elongated load bearing element.

26. (currently amended) An implantable orthopedic device comprising an elongated load-bearing element with at least one elongate opening for receiving a fixation element, the opening having internal surfaces including a recessed surface which is arranged around the opening and which extends and tapers inwardly from an upper surface of the load-bearing element towards a bone contacting surface, the opening having planar sidewalls along an elongate portion of the opening extending parallel to a central axis of the opening which extends from the upper surface to the bone contacting surface and an one-piece insert that may be inserted in the opening wherein the insert exhibits an external form that is generally complementary to the internal surface of the opening,~~for engagement therewith~~ and wherein the insert has a continuous first portion complimentary to the tapered recessed surface around the opening and a multi-section second portion including a section having a projection complimentary to the planar sidewalls of the opening, the insert exhibits a central through-bore for mounting the fixation

element, and in which the implantable orthopedic device has a
bottom surface,exhibits a means for the projection extending
along the bottom surface for holding the insert in the opening,
wherein the insert ~~exhibits at least one locking mechanism~~
section with the projection is deflectablewith ~~which~~
~~conformingly locks the load bearing element in the opening.~~